James Burnham asks:
VIETNAMIZATION: WHAT NOW?
see page 1058

NATIONAL REVIEW

WHAT STRIKES DO TO THE INNOCENT BYSTANDER

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NATIONAL REVIEW

VOL. XXIV No. 38 SEPTEMBER 29, 1972

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

. . . we put the Munich massacre into perspective. When the news broke, we juggled our articles section to make room and asked **Miles Copeland** for an assessment of who did it, and why, and what's coming next. Mr. Copeland, formerly a consultant to the State Department and now a specialist on security affairs for international corporations in Africa and the Middle East, responded with a rundown on the major Arab terrorist organizations—all of which are in disarray and only one of which, he notes, has Israel as its primary target. Mr. Copeland's educated guess: Look for more Munich-type operations—and look, too, for the concealed hand of Peking. As it happens, Mr. Copeland also has a book review in this issue, which see for more hard facts on the Arab world. . . . Strikes, everyone knows, are a problem; until we see the problem correctly, says **Alan Reynolds**, our economist in residence, the poor old public will go on paying through the nose. Lesson One: the target of much union action is not the employer, but the public. . . . **Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn** demolishes the notion (still alive, oddly, after the recent unpleasantness in Czechoslovakia) that humane Marxism is possible. . . . **Russell Kirk**, ever on the watch for educational perversions, divines the true meaning of busing: It has little to do with integration, everything to do with leveling. . . . And **Wm. F. Buckley Jr.** visits Attica Prison, and wonders what happened to the men who led the revolt there last September.

—CHS

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BOOKS

A Child's Guide to the Arabs

MILES COPELAND

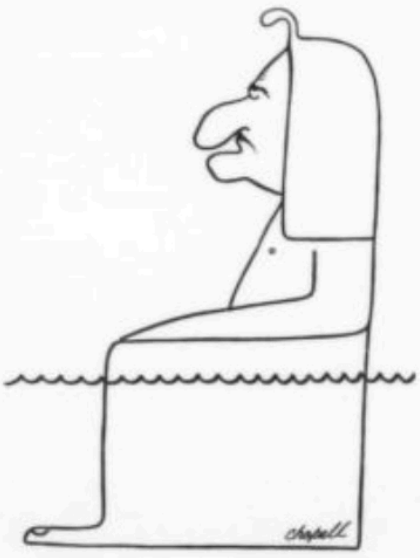
Storm over the Arab World: A People in Revolution
By Eugene Fisher and M. Cherif Bassiouni
Follett, 429 pp., $8.95

The first play to be based on the life of President Nasser appeared last week in Beirut, Lebanon, in a gymnasium-cum-auditorium called "The Theatre of Revolution." It will never reach Broadway; the audience was unenthusiastic—or perhaps just bewildered; there were no cries for "author" (anyway, the author was anonymous); it ran for only three nights and got only one review ("Elegant in its simplicity," said an arty, left-wing French-language weekly). But there was one line which I treasure: "If my people believe all I say," mused the play's Nasser, "they are missing the point."

The author must have known Nasser personally, for Nasser spoke often in these terms of the contradictions in "Arab" public opinion, and of the difficulties they posed for any leader addressing his public. To attain power, the leader of an Arab country must make bigger and better promises than his rivals. Since no one expects him to carry them out (Israel, the CIA or some other outside force can be counted upon to intervene), the sky is the limit. Once in power, he may invent the outside force if it doesn't appear, or he can make substitute promises, or merely forget the old ones. Despite what they are fond of saying of themselves, "Arabs" have amazingly short memories.

But that's not all. The leader of an Arab country must make his promises in terms which the members of his audience *think* they accept, but really don't. He must have the knack of speaking passionately and earnestly in one set of terms, while allowing his audience to understand that they may add up what he says in quite another.

Take Arab nationalism, for example. No leader of an Arab country could attain power, or hold it for long, were he not to manifest fervent support to the notion of Arab unity. But how long would, say, President Sadat of Egypt last were his people *really to believe* that he intends to unite Egypt with other Arab countries? (His colonels may figure some way of annexing Libya before "U-Day" in September 1973, but only an insignificant percentage of his people believe he intends to "unite" Egypt with it.) Or war with Israel. President Sadat must periodically assure his people that Egypt will "never" make peace, and that his armies are poised on the border ready to go. But suppose those youngsters shouting hawkish slogans in Cairo's Liberation Square were to wake up one morning to learn that their President had actually ordered the Egyptian army to cross the Suez Canal, what then? Would they proceed to the nearest recruiting offices, making lines two blocks long like those we saw in American cities after the bombing of Pearl Harbor? Or would they quietly agree with the Egyptian chief of staff who, just after Sadat made a few too-specific threats against Israel, said, "This time the idiot has gone too far!" and remove themselves from the streets?



One could go on and on. The leader of an Arab country attains and holds power by denouncing the United States and praising Russia, yet he spends a fair percentage of his waking hours trying to figure ways of making secret deals with the United States, or with private American interests, showing clearly that he values his deals with the Soviets mainly for what they are worth as leverage in negotiating alternative sources of aid. He pours praise on the Palestinians, addressing them as "our Arab brethren," yet he treats them as foreigners, and second-rate foreigners at that. (The Libyan government allowed some four thousand Palestinians to become Libyan citizens, but has since rescinded the decision, and is currently working out a deportation scheme which will be much less conspicuous than that of Uganda's against its Asian population, but just as thorough.) Most important, the leaders of Arab countries must constantly talk "revolution," yet their various "Revolutionary Command Councils" talk and think in terms which would have been considered reactionary in the days of the Ottoman Empire.

So how does a young diplomat or international businessman prepare himself for an assignment in the so-called "Arab world"? What does he read? Visit the State Department library, or any of the libraries of the international corporations, and you will find more

books on the Arab world than on any other geographical area. There are hoary books by scholars of the area itself, whose relevance to what is going on there is what books on astrology are to astronomy. There are books by American and British academics who learned what they know by reading books by other academics. And there are a few books by genuine area experts such as Malcolm Kerr, Patrick Seale and Morroe Berger, but these presuppose such familiarity with the so-called "standard" works that they are of only limited use to a beginner. "What I need," a newly appointed ambassador to an Arab capital once told me, "is a book which sets out all the information and misinformation in an orderly way so that I can at least learn what to *talk* to people about."

SUCH A BOOK now exists. Written in beautiful grade-school English at about the four-legs-good-two-legs-bad level of intellect, it is a complete and logically organized catalog of all there is to say, true and false, about the Arab world. Its range of content is as wide as its authors are naïve and superficial. There are eight chapters of historical background, then one chapter each (a total of twelve) for the principal Arab countries, and a chapter each for the area's outstanding problems and important events of recent history—the Suez affair, the Arab-Israel wars, oil, the problem of water. Finally, there are two chapters of conclusions, the first of which summons all the current clichés in support of the argument that there *is* such a thing as an "Arab revolution," and the second of which is an essay on how the United States is now "engaged in a fierce campaign to block this revolutionary principle in any region where its current conception of political or economic national interest seems to be threatened." The authors are Eugene M. Fisher, who has apparently spent a bit of time in the area and who has tremendous enthusiasm for it, and M. Cherif Bassiouni, a professor of law at De Paul University who was born in Egypt but left it before the events which he and his partner have written about. They are relatively uncontaminated by any first-hand knowledge of their subject. Their *Storm over the Arab World* is truly a valuable book, the ingenuousness of its authors and their lack of familiarity with what there really is of an "Arab revolution" enhancing its over-all merit rather than detracting from it. □

In the Next Issue

David Brudnoy will conduct a guided tour through the maze of books offered to the election-year public.

August 1914
By Alexander Solzhenitsyn
Farrar, 622 pp., $10

THE SWEEP OF GREATNESS

FRANCIS RUSSELL

At least half a century seems to have to elapse for a writer to emerge who can recreate an era in its perdurable dimensions, particularly if that era is one of war. It took that amount of time after Napoleon's Russian debacle for Tolstoy to produce his great panorama of the period. As distant from World War I as Tolstoy was from the Napoleonic war, Alexander Solzhenitsyn has launched his reconstruction of that later era with *August 1914*, a book he describes as a fascicle of a work in many parts that will occupy him for the next twenty years and that he does not expect to live to finish.

INEVITABLY, to the point of cliché, the comparison will be with *War and Peace*. Yet, if it is possible to see through the fogs of contemporary judgment, even judging only by this fascicle, what Solzhenitsyn is engaged in creating *is* the Tolstoyan epic of the First World War. He himself is conscious of this inheritance—in fact the aged Tolstoy makes a brief appearance in one of the preliminary chapters—yet he has no false modesty about his talent which, like Tolstoy, he sees as God-given. His other books were born out of his bitter conflict with an authoritarian regime. But in *August 1914* he has reverted to a theme beyond himself, one he admits has haunted him since he first conceived of it 35 years earlier: the picture of what life really was in Russia on the brink of 1914, what truly happened in the first month of the first war.

Solzhenitsyn's father was an officer in the First World War, he an artillery captain in the Second. Above all his book is an act of piety. What his father and his country experienced in that cataclysm, he has devoted all his talent and strength of emotion to rescuing from oblivion or from the deliberate falsification of those who would have us believe that the true history of Russia began only when it became the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. And what an astonishing achievement is this fascicle, the more in that the source materials taken for granted in the West were so often denied the author. He writes of those early battles as if he had been a participant, as if he had really seen them through the eyes of his alter ego, his general staff colonel Vorotyntsev. How many survivors must he have talked to over the years, how much must he have absorbed from his father's experiences!

The dominant theme of *August 1914* is the sorrily planned, hastily and poorly prepared Russian invasion of East Prussia and the annihilating defeat of Samsonov's Second Army at Tannenberg. Samsonov's defeat is the more ironic in that Rennenkamp's First Army stood by and let it happen. If, in spite of all the deficiencies of the Russian Army, Rennenkamp had supported Samsonov in the planned pincer movement, the Russians by their sheer mass would have overwhelmed the Germans—a fact Ludendorff later admitted in his memoirs. Solzhenitsyn has managed to capture the essential tragedy of those days, leading up to the not-unworthy Samsonov's suicide. At staff and army level he makes clear all the whys and wherefores, with acid portraits of court favorites, time-servers, sycophants and bunglers. Then